DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 361 092 PS 021 633

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TITLE A Survey Instrument: Assessment of Education Interests, Experiences, and Learning Preferences of Parents of Young Children.
PUB DATE [93]
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Rearing; *Community Surveys; Early Childhood Education; Interests; *Learning Activities; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Education; Preschool Children
IDENTIFIERS *Texas (Denton)

ABSTRACT

A five-page English language survey instrument was developed by the Denton County (Texas) Parent Education Coalition to survey a sample of parents representing the economic, educational, and lifestyle diversity of the county. A Spanish-language version, a shortened two-page questionnaire, and an adapted interview form for handicapped and illiterate parents were also developed. The full-length English-language survey instrument contains 17 questions covering family demographics as well as parents' education interests, experiences, and learning preferences. A total of 740 parents from 30 randomly selected preschools participated in the survrey. It was found that they considered: (1) family, books, and friends to be the most helpful sources of parenting information; (2) experiential learning, discussion, and reading to be their preferred methods of instruction; and (3) building their child's self-esteem and helping children do well in school to be the parenting topics of most interest. Results of the study are being used to plan parent education programs in the community. (The full-length English-language survey instrument is included.) (MDM)

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ED 361 092

A Survey Instrument: Assessment of Education Interests, Experiences, and Learning Preferences of Parents of Young Children

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A SURVEY INSTRUMENT: ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION INTERESTS, EXPERIENCES, AND LEARNING PREFERENCES OF PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

An important step in serving parent education needs of families is understanding those families. A process will be described which has been utilized by the Denton County Parent Education Coalition to survey the parent education interests, experiences, and learning preferences of a sample of parents representing the economic, educational, and lifestyle diversity of the county.

The steps of the process include the (a) design of survey instruments, (b) development of a sampling strategy, (c) distribution and collection of surveys, (d) analysis, and (e) dissemination and interpretation of results to participating organizations. A five-page English-language survey instrument was developed which includes questions related to relevant demographic information as well as parent perceptions of their parent education interests, experiences, and learning preferences. In addition, a Spanish language version, a shortened 2-page questionnaire, and an adapted interview form for handicapped and illiterate parents were developed. Content of the survey instrument was based upon a review of literature as well as the goals

and objectives of the county-wide coalition.

The coalition states in their goals that a proactive position is preferable to a reactive position. The first goal is to strive to anticipate and assist in meeting the needs of parents in Denton County. To assess parent education needs in the county is stated as the first objective of the coalition.

In the development of the survey, the long form was pilot tested with a group of preschool parents. Revisions were based upon pilot participant feedback and expert opinions from content and evaluation experts.

Sample

Parents from 30 randomly selected preschools and child care centers completed a questionnaire which inquired about interests and preferences for parent education. Analysis of the data revealed that of the 740 participants, 679 were mothers. The sample included 10.5% from mother-headed families and 61.2% from families in which both the mother and father worked.

Summary of Responses

The sources of parenting information that the respondents found must helpful were: (a) family

(42.3%), (b) books (24.3%) (c) friends (18.9%), and (d) church (17.6%). The life experiences that respondents found must helpful in learning about being a parent were: (a) talking to friends or family (34.6%); (b) talking with another parent (31.6%); (c) reading a book or article (23.1%); (d) watching another parent (18.4%); and (e) attending a program or educational meeting (16.2%).

Experiential learning (54.2%), discussion (37.6%), and reading (34.6%) were the methods of instruction that the parent respondents preferred. The parenting topics of most interest to this group of parents of young children were (a) building your child's self esteem and (b) helping children do well in school. Other topics of high interest to this group of parents were: (a) helping children have good relationships; (b) effective discipline, and (c) talking with children.

Twenty six percent of the respondents had attended a class or program about parenting in the last year. Of those who had attended a program, the most common sponsors were church (12.2%) and public schools (8.8%). Ninety five percent of those who attended a program reported finding it helpful. Approximately 76% of those who had not previously attended a class expressed

an interest in participating.

Use of Results

Results of the study are being utilized by the parent education coalition and member organizations for coordination and planning of appropriate parent education programs. Participating early childhood programs have been provided findings related to parents in their programs. Educators, extension specialists, counselors, researchers, and public policy advocates are among those who may be interested in adapting this survey to meet their own needs.

1____ 2____ 3____ 4____

PARENT SURVEY
DENTON COUNTY PARENT EDUCATION COALITION

The Denton County Parent Education Coalition is a group of people who are committed to improving life for children and families by providing information and opportunities for parents to learn more about children and find support for parenting.

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey so the Coalition can work more closely with parents in planning.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

(5-6) 1. Where do you live?

01____Aubrey	08____Hebron	15____Little Elm
02____Argyle	09____Hickory Shores	16____Northlake
03____Bartonville	10____Highland Village	17____Pilot Point
04____Carrollton	11____Justin	18____Ponder
05____Corinth	12____Krum	19____Roanoke
06____Denton	13____Lake Dallas	20____Sanger
07____Flower Mound	14____Lewisville	21____The Colony

22____Other/Rural (Location_____)

(7) 2. Check your *MAIN* role. *Who you are in the family?*

1____mother 3____grandmother 5____stepmother 7____other (Explain _____)
2____father 4____grandfather 6____stepfather

(8-16) 3. Which of the following best describes your family? Check all that apply to you.

08____ Two-parent family: One parent does not work outside the home
09____ Two-parent family: Both parents work outside the home
10____ Single parent: Father head
11____ Single parent: Mother head
12____ Step parent
13____ Foster parent
14____ Adoptive parent
15____ Grandparent rearing grandchildren
16____ Other (Explain_____)

(17-19) 4. Which language(s) do you speak at home?

17____Spanish 18____English 19____Other (Name _____)

(20) 5. Mark the category which most closely describes your ethnic background.

1____Caucasian 3____Hispanic 5____Other_____
2____African American 4____Asian

(21-26) 6. What are the number and ages of the children in your family? Please write the number of children you have in each category. [For example: "3 to 5 years olds.....2"(number of children)]

Ages of Children	Number of Children
Prenatal/Birth to 17 months old	21_____
18 months to 3 years old	22_____
Over 3 to 5 years old	23_____
Over 5 to 8 years old	24_____
Over 8 to 12 years old	25_____
Over 12 to 19 years old	26_____

(27-28) 7. What are you and your spouse's HIGHEST level of educational experience?

Education	(27)You	(28)Spouse
No formal schooling	1_____	1_____
Completed elementary school	2_____	2_____
Attended high school	3_____	3_____
Graduated from high school	4_____	4_____
Attended trade/vocational school	5_____	5_____
Attended college	6_____	6_____

PARENTING EDUCATION INFORMATION

(29-37) 8. Who or what helps you in being a parent? Circle a number from 5 to 1 with **5 the most helpful** to you. Rate all the items below. Circle the "X" if you have NO EXPERIENCE with the form of parent education.

	VERY HELPFUL	HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	A LITTLE HELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL	NO EXPERIENCE
(29)family	5	4	3	2	1	X
(30)friends	5	4	3	2	1	X
(31)counselors	5	4	3	2	1	X
(32)teachers	5	4	3	2	1	X
(33)church	5	4	3	2	1	X
(34)television	5	4	3	2	1	X
(35)newspapers	5	4	3	2	1	X
(36)books	5	4	3	2	1	X
(37)other (Explain ____	5	4	3	2	1	X

_____)

(38-44) 9. How helpful do you find each of the following in learning about being a parent? Rate all the items below. Circle a number from 5 to 1 with **5 the most helpful** to you. Circle the "X" if you have NO EXPERIENCE with this form of parent education.

	VERY HELPFUL	HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	A LITTLE HELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL	NO EXPERIENCE
(38)watching another parent	5	4	3	2	1	X
(39)watching TV/or video	5	4	3	2	1	X
(40)reading a book or article	5	4	3	2	1	X
(41)attending a program or educational meeting .	5	4	3	2	1	X
(42)talking to friends or family	5	4	3	2	1	X
(43)talking with a parent	5	4	3	2	1	X
(44)other	5	4	3	2	1	X

(Explain_____)

(45-49) 10. How do you like to learn best? Rate all the items below. Circle a number from 5 to 1 with **5 the best method** for you. Circle the "X" if you have NO EXPERIENCE with the form of parent education.

	MOST LIKE	LIKE	NEITHER LIKE NOR DISLIKE	DISLIKE	MOST DISLIKE	NO EXPERIENCE
(45)lectures or talks	5	4	3	2	1	X
(46)reading	5	4	3	2	1	X
(47)discussion	5	4	3	2	1	X
(48)doing	5	4	3	2	1	X
(49)other	5	4	3	2	1	X

(Explain_____)

(50-65) 11. **Rate the parenting topics** from most interest to least interest. 5 **is of most interest.**

	MOST INTEREST	STRONG INTEREST	SOME INTEREST	LITTLE INTEREST	NO INTEREST
(50)helping children have good relationships	5	4	3	2	1
(51)effective discipline	5	4	3	2	1
(52)what to expect from children at different ages	5	4	3	2	1
(53)activities for children at different ages	5	4	3	2	1
(54)building your child's self esteem	5	4	3	2	1
(55)helping children do well in school	5	4	3	2	1
(56)preparation for parenting	5	4	3	2	1
(57)nutrition, health and safety	5	4	3	2	1
(58)child care choices	5	4	3	2	1
(59)talking with children	5	4	3	2	1
(60)single parenting	5	4	3	2	1
(61)step parenting	5	4	3	2	1
(62)drug and alcohol abuse	5	4	3	2	1
(63)money management	5	4	3	2	1
(64)managing work and family	5	4	3	2	1
(65)other (Explain_____)	5	4	3	2	1

(66) 12. Have you attended a class, group, or program about being a parent or which taught parenting skills in the last year?

1____YES 2____NO (Skip to #16)

(67-77) 13. If you answered YES to question #12, please check all the sponsors of programs that you have attended.

(67)____child care center
(68)____public schools
(69)____church
(70)____parent organization
(71)____hospital
(72)____counseling/mental health center
(73)____college or university class for credit
(74)____high school class for credit
(75)____County Extension Service
(76)____community organization (Name_____)
(77)____other (Name _____)

(78) 14. Was your attendance in a class, group or program for parents helpful?

1____YES 2____NO

If your answer to question #14 is YES, answer #15. If your answer to question #14 is NO, skip to question #17.

(79) 15. How helpful was your attendance in a class, group or program? Circle a number from 5 to 1 with **5 the most helpful.**

VERY HELPFUL	HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	A LITTLE HELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL
5	4	3	2	1

Skip to #17.

(80) 16. If you answered NO to question #12, would you be interested in participating in a class, group, or program for parents in the future?

1_____YES 2_____NO

17. Please list below happenings, situations, circumstances, events, etc., which keeps you from being the parent you would like to be?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Please return this survey form.

Are you interested in receiving further information about parent education or school involvement in Denton County? Contact: Barbara Fowler, Denton County Extension Home Economist, (817) 566-3607 or METRO 434-2052.

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81____ 82____ 83____